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Nevertheless, allow me, by way of conclusion, to say a few words about the wider context of this endeavour -- namely, Canada's foreign cultural relations. Cultural interest and activity in Canada are enjoying a period of unprecedented vigour. From a base in universities and institutions of higher learning, for a long time almost their sole repositories, cultural programs have spread to other sectors of society and become more universally accessible. This has led to the decision of my Government to support cultural activities in a number of areas, so that we now have, for example, a policy of support for the performing arts, a museums policy and a policy of support for the production of feature films in Canada.

It was plain that this growth and diversification should be reflected in the foreign policy of our Government, so as to project on the international scene the breadth, depth and creativity of Canadian cultural activities. Accordingly, the Government has approved in principle a five-year plan for broader cultural relations with other countries.

The objectives of Canada's foreign cultural policy, subjected as we are to the generally welcome but somewhat too pervasive influences from the United States, are to maintain and strengthen our British and French connections, to sustain our participation in the institutions of the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, to diversify our cultural exchanges towards selected countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. For the selection of activities to be undertaken or promoted, we have chosen three criteria.

First, we plan to establish cultural contacts with more countries and to assist Canadian intellectuals and artists in establishing and cultivating stronger ties with their foreign counterparts.

Second, we are attempting to supplement the conventional types of exchange with programs in new areas, where the number of requests for assistance we receive bears testimony to a growing need in Canada, such as more exchanges of teachers in the academic field and more youth exchanges at the cultural level.

Finally, we have borne in mind the findings of important international conferences on cultural exchanges, such as the UNESCO conferences in Helsinki and Venice, which have clearly emphasized the importance of exchanging people, as opposed to simply trading cultural goods. In our view, it is the promotion of contacts with other artists and other audiences that will strengthen relations between different peoples and cultures and ultimately lead to the production of works meeting contemporary expectations.

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